

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A surgical stapling apparatus comprising:
a handle assembly including a handle member which is movable through an actuation stroke;
an elongated body extending distally from the handle assembly, the elongated body having a distal end adapted to releasably engage a tool assembly;
a control rod extending through the elongated body, the control rod having a proximal end operatively connected to the handle member, the control rod being movable in response to movement of the handle member through the actuation stroke; and
a control rod locking mechanism supported on the elongated body, the control rod locking mechanism including an engagement member positioned to operatively engage a tool assembly during attachment of the tool assembly onto the distal end of the elongated body portion to prevent distal movement of the control rod until the tool assembly is lockingly engaged to the elongated body.
2. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the control rod includes a recess and the engagement member is movable between a first position located within the recess and a second position located externally of the recess.
3. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 2, further including a biasing member positioned to urge the engagement member to the first position.
4. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the engagement member includes a circular head portion, the circular head portion being urged into the control rod recess by the biasing member, wherein distal movement of the control rod acts to cam the engagement member from the first position to the second position to move the circular head portion from the control rod recess.
5. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the control rod locking mechanism further includes a blocking plate, the blocking plate being

movable from a position spaced from the engagement member to a position obstructing movement of the engagement member from the first position to the second position.

6. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 5, further including a biasing member positioned to urge the blocking plate to the position spaced from the engagement member.

7. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the blocking plate is positioned to engage a tool assembly during attachment of the tool assembly to the elongated body, such engagement effecting movement of the blocking plate from the position spaced from the engagement member to the position obstructing movement of the engagement member.

8. A surgical stapling apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the blocking plate includes a finger extension, the finger extension being positioned to engage a tool assembly during attachment of the tool assembly to the elongated body.